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Artists OF THE YEAR

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OF THE WEEK



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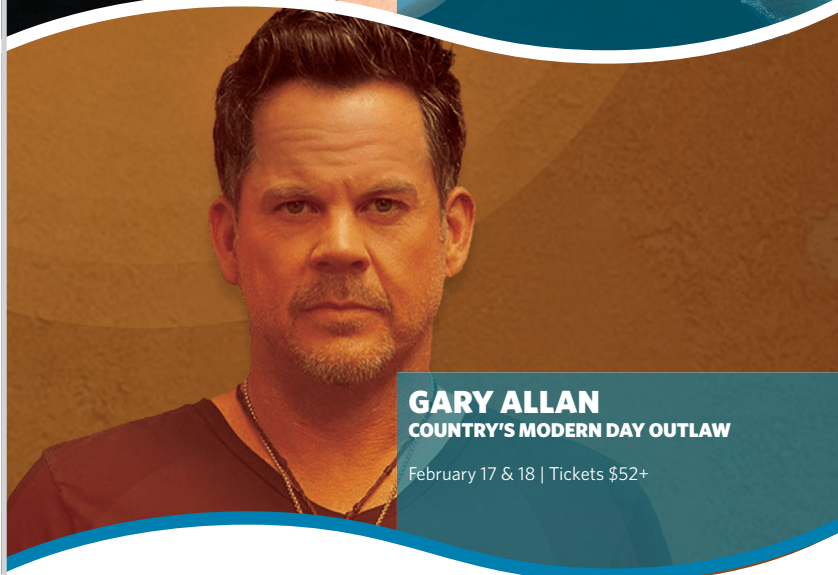
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THE SHORTLIST



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Moose population on Lake Superior's Isle Royale, triple what it was a decade ago

\$1 billion

Amount the state wants the PolyMet mine to keep in reserve to clean up the inevitable pollution

6th

Minnesota's ranking among the nation's healthiest states, down from 4th last year

"Now Trump needs to save 'Happy Birthday' so I can quit saying 'Happy Uterine Liberation Day!'"

Reader Justin Olson responds to "Thank you, President Trump, for winning the War on Christmas," at citypages.com.

WOMEN RISING

IT APPEARS women have finally tired of the creeps, degenerates, mutants, and socio-paths running this country. Come next year, a record number will seek to overthrow male dominance.

With the elections still 11 months away, 383 women have already registered to run for the U.S. House, nearly triple the number at this time in 2016. The ranks of women running in governor's races has doubled. Meanwhile, the pro-choice PAC Emily's List has already heard from 20,000 prospective candidates, compared to 900 during 2016.

A successful insurrection won't assure good government. (See: Bachmann, Michele.) But the smart money says that, at the very least, we'll see a precipitous decline in perverts.

POPULAR STORIES

AT CITYPAGES.COM

HEGGIES VS. PAPA JOHN'S:

Beloved Minnesota pizza brand beefs with tasteless chain

Is this local brewery's 'EASY A' can art offensive?

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Minneapolis **SUPER BOWL HOST COMMITTEE** looks like a who's who of tax avoidance

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FACT CHECK

Was Lake Calhoun named after a racist statesman or not?

Opponents of changing the name of Lake Calhoun have a new crusade, calling on all Minneapolitans to open their eyes and realize how they've been duped into believing the lake was named after a 19th-century bigot.

A recent half-page ad in the Star Tribune, as well as a "Save Lake Calhoun" GoFundMe, are making the case that the lake was not named for U.S. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun—the nation's preeminent advocate for slavery of his time—but rather for a little-known Lieutenant Calhoun of the U.S. Army.

Save Lake Calhoun raised a single piece of evidence: an 1890 Star Tribune clipping in which the paper attributed the name to a "Lieutenant Calhoun of early days."

Alas, the statement's already been debunked by the Star Tribune, as well as the guy who named the lake.

In 1817 and 1823, Major Stephen H. Long was sent on government-sponsored expeditions to present-day Minnesota. His task was to document important landmarks and learn about Indian customs, the better for the U.S. to expand its line of military occupation and establish fur trading centers. Secretary Calhoun issued Long's orders.

Long kept a meticulous journal and wrote a lot of letters. One addressed to the general who nominated him for the 1823 job expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to adventure on the government dime.

"I hope the names of our friends in the Administration will remain as long as the perpetual hills and never be forgotten till the rivers shall cease to flow," Long wrote. "Should I find any rivers, mountains, cataracts, caverns or fountains worthy to bear their names, I shall cheer-



JEFF WHEELER, STAR TRIBUNE

fully assume the function of the priest, so far as to christen them."

Geologist William Keating, who tagged along on Long's 1823 expedition, later wrote a book in which he recalled coming across "A body of water, which is not represented upon any map that we know of, has been discovered in this vicinity within a few years, and has received the name of Lake

Calhoun, in honour of the Secretary of War."

If he were alive today, Long might thank the Save Lake Calhoun people for defending his original choice. But as a man described by his contemporaries to be extremely logical and intolerant of any "incompetence or irresponsibility," he probably wouldn't have appreciated their attempts to rewrite history. —SUSAN DU

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Drinkers from the Fountainhead

The shadowy group behind Buffalo Wild Wings, Jimmy John's, and Culver's



Mike Mullen

Next time you're basking in the steam off a pile of Asian Zing boneless chicken from Buffalo Wild Wings, spare a thought for Aaron Vance, standing dumbstruck in a woodworking factory.

In 2009, Vance arrived for the 7 a.m. shift at Wood Structures, Inc. in Saco, Maine. A sawyer with a decade's experience, he had just punched in when everyone was called to a meeting. The company was shutting down, workers were told, and all employees were being placed on an "unpaid leave of absence."

A few weeks later, those absences became permanent. No one bothered to tell the workers.

Vance was one of 180 employees who argued in a class-action suit that they should've received 60 days' notice, severance pay, and payment for unused vacation hours. The suit targeted Roark Capital Group, an Atlanta private equity firm.

Roark's response was astonishing: Workers couldn't sue Roark, which owned more than 98 percent of the company, because it was merely a "parent company," not their "employer," and therefore not subject to employment law.

The woodworkers were technically employed by Wood Structures, and good luck collecting from that company, which was in bankruptcy. A judge saw through these arguments. The parties later settled on non-public terms.

Founded in 2001, Roark brought on investors in waves. By 2008 it was sitting

on more than \$1 billion. It waited, wisely, as overpriced companies collapsed that year.

Roark emerged from the crisis with an appetite to invest, and has developed a taste for restaurant chains, grabbing major holdings in Arby's, Jimmy John's, Hardee's/Carl's Jr., and Cinnabon, among others.

Last month, Roark made its biggest deal yet: a \$2.9 billion purchase of Buffalo Wild Wings. When the purchase is complete next year, B-Dubs will once again be privately held. Very privately.

Despite its splashy purchases of well-known brand names, Roark, incorporated in Delaware and the Cayman Islands, keeps a low profile. This month, it declined even to address a report that it was raising another \$7 billion for acquisitions. Its founder, Neal K. Aronson, does an in-depth interview about once a decade.

The firm is likely a mystery to the tens of thousands of lower-income employees of its restaurants, and the millions of low- to middle-income people who eat at them. It handles \$7 billion in investments in more than 60 companies.

On its website, Roark explains the inspiration behind its name: Howard Roark, the fictional architect-hero of the Ayn Rand novel *The Fountainhead*. This comes with the assurance that the name "does not connote any political philosophy," and is merely about admiration for the character's "independence and integrity."

In the book, Roark demonstrates this "integrity" by blowing up a low-income housing project because it wasn't built to his

designs, an act he defends in a monologue about the value of selfishness and ego. And the evil of charity. "I am a man who does not exist for others," he declares.

The book is a favorite of Donald Trump's, who has said it "relates to business, beauty, life... inner emotions," and "everything." Trump shares this philosophical appreciation—dark, if not exactly deep—with Andrew Puzder, his first choice for U.S. labor secretary, who later withdrew after spousal abuse allegations resurfaced.

Puzder started his career as a pro-life, anti-labor attorney, and was installed in 2000 as the CEO of CKE Restaurant Holdings, the corporation behind Hardee's and Carl's Jr. When Roark swooped to buy CKE in 2013, it kept Puzder in place, a reflection of its "partnering with management" strategy.

As CEO, Puzder opposed the Affordable Care Act and minimum wage increases of any kind, and once spoke highly of the idea of employing robots, which "never take a vacation" or file "an age, sex, or racial discrimination case." Puzder was right to be bitter. His fast-food chains were sued often.

In June, Carl's Jr. settled for \$1.4 million with 37 employees whom it neglected to pay minimum wage. A survey of CKE employees found 28 percent were forced to work off-the-clock, and 76 percent had worked sick due to understaffing. Another class-action suit alleges CKE prohibits franchisees from hiring employees who work at another CKE business, which effectively suppresses employee wages.

(Shift supervisors at a Carl's Jr. make about \$25,000 a year.)

Jimmy John's is currently embroiled in a class-action suit alleging it refused to pay assistant managers who worked overtime. Arby's has settled similar suits, with a new class-action filed in Florida this year.

In 2015, Buffalo Wild Wings settled for \$1.8 million with employees in Illinois and Michigan, who claimed the company was forcing tipped employees to do regular labor, like cleaning bathrooms, while receiving less than the minimum wage. This year, two employees in Ohio sued Buffalo Wild Wings for doing the same thing.

This is the beauty of the franchise model: Franchisees are free to "innovate" at their restaurants as they see fit. Often enough, they do it in ways that screw their employees.

The case of the Maine woodworkers should be instructive for employees at Roark's Buffalo Wild Wings. When the bourbon honey mustard hits the fan, don't come asking your new "parent company" for charity. Heed their harsh lessons and, as soon as you can afford it, consider moving out from under their roof. **GM**

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Artists OF THE YEAR

Meet the photographers,
writers, comedians,
and actors who shined
in 2017



BOBBY ROGERS

Black is beautiful. That's the message Bobby Rogers hopes to impart with his photography. "The Blacker the Berry," his debut exhibition at Public Functionary this fall, featured 10 photographs of black subjects posed against jewel-hued backdrops and draped in elegant threads. The portraits, measuring 3-by-4 feet each, impart an aesthetic of ancient royal relics, while the slick quality of the photographs lends a futuristic, otherworldly bent.

While growing up in north Minneapolis in the '90s, Rogers wasn't exposed to contemporary black artists. "A lot of what I learned about myself in the early stages came through hip-hop and came through listening to musicians talk about their blackness and being able to relate to it and being able to relate to their journeys," he says.

He began teaching himself how to photograph through YouTube videos, blogs, and practice. After graduating from MCAD, Rogers amassed a body of work, including a portrait series, inspired by the hashtag #BeingBlackandMuslim, that was picked up by BuzzFeed.

When Tricia Heuring of Public Functionary approached Rogers about doing a solo show, Rogers had planned an amalgamation of his photo projects. But when he arrived at a portrait he'd done of a black woman looking elegant and proud in blue velvet, he realized he wanted to explore that style of portraiture more.

What viewers notice immediately about the series is the subjects' eyes: They're glowy white, a look achieved with contacts and what he calls "post-production magic." The effect is inspired by anime, spirituality, and mysticism.

Rogers' photography isn't meant to be a provocative visual stunt. Rather, he wants to elevate images of black culture to counteract societal narratives of blackness. "I want these images to restructure the inter-prejudicial mindset that a lot of blacks have of themselves of not being beautiful," he says. —ERICA RIVERA



Bobby Rogers

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Meghan Kreidler



Bao Phi

ALLEN WEEKS, THAI PHY MEDIA

MEGHAN KREIDLER

At the 2017 Ivey Awards, Meghan Kreidler won twice: She was honored as a member of the Vietgone ensemble, and subsequently received this year's prestigious Emerging Artist award. Accepting the latter, she left the audience with an appropriate rallying cry for 2017: "Screw fear!"

This year Kreidler exploded on the Twin Cities theater scene with one unforgettable performance after another, from a conflicted daughter in the History Theatre's *Paper Dreams of Harry Chin* to a fierce Aldonza in Theater Latté Da's *Man of La Mancha* to the knowing bombshell Linda Low in *Flower Drum Song*, a collaboration between Theater Mu and Park Square Theatre.

"I feel like I'm finally hitting my stride," says Kreidler. "I can trust my ideas and my choices."

Though this was a breakout year for Kreidler, she's no stranger to local stages. After graduating in 2013 from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA program, she began landing roles with some of the area's most prominent companies. Among them, perhaps most critically, was Theater Mu.

"Growing up, I always felt like I had to look a certain way if I was going to be successful; have certain features, basically just very European," says the actor, whose mother is Korean-American. "When I did my first show with Mu, I was like, 'Oh, wow, this is a whole other world that I didn't know existed.'"

Kreidler's busy life in theater could be enough, but she's also an emerging rock star, fronting Kiss the Tiger. When they perform live, she makes full use of her powerful stage presence.

"I don't consider myself a musical-

theater singer, even though I've done a lot of musicals," she says. "Having the experience of singing in the band gave me a different idea of how I can approach it.... Playing music has helped me find more abandonment in my theater work."

Her double life, and her rising profile, inevitably lead to questions about where she's headed.

"I don't know how sustainable it is," she says about going from rehearsal room to rock club. "I'm still pretty young, I guess, and have a lot of energy." She already has commitments through August (including a stint with puppetry in the Children's Theater's *Lorax*). —JAY GABLER

BAO PHI

Writer and spoken-word artist Bao Phi's 2017 veered between extremes. On the positive end, he published his second collection of poetry, *Thousand Star Hotel*, and his first children's book, *A Different Pond*. The poems unpack a lifetime's worth of experience, from fleeing Vietnam as an infant, experiencing racism growing up in Minneapolis, struggles in therapy, and his fierce love for his eight-year-old daughter. *A Different Pond* is based on early-morning fishing excursions with his father, during which he learned what life was like in Vietnam.

In October, Phi brought his daughter with him to his Twin Cities Book Festival appearance. "It was 50-50 whether she would heckle me or not," he says with a laugh.

His author appearances extended far beyond Minnesota, however. Via Kickstarter, he met his goal of \$6,000 in a week, a total that increased to \$10,000 by the end of the campaign. Those contributions

Emily Fridlund



April Sellers

DOUG KNUTSON, SEAN SMUDA

funded a tour for *Thousand Star Hotel*. Phi has traveled in four-day blocks by bus or train with stops in Seattle, Los Angeles, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

As program director at the Loft, Phi celebrated the 15th anniversary of Equilibrium, a spoken-word series he founded. “Running anything for 15 years is a feat, let alone something that lasts 15 years for indigenous and people of color and it pays everyone,” he says.

While those professional accomplishments are enough to make any author envious, on the personal side, Phi says, “It’s been a difficult year.” Worry and depression dogged him; despite his success, he struggled with being down on himself. Therapy-guided introspection helped. “I’m trying to enjoy the good things. I’m doing my best,” he says. “I’m trying to appreciate every moment that I have with my daughter, and I’m trying to appreciate how gracious and generous people have been with these two books.” —ERICA RIVERA

EMILY FRIDLUND

In July, when Edina native Emily Fridlund received the news that her debut novel, *History of Wolves*, was long-listed for the prestigious Man Booker prize, she was busy with something more important: giving birth. After a day or two of recovery, she checked her email and “assumed that I must have misunderstood, because this was not something I was expecting at all,” she says. “It was quite a shock, totally overwhelming news in the context of an overwhelming time.”

History of Wolves is set in the northern woods of Minnesota. The protagonist, a 14-year-old girl nicknamed Linda, is “sort of overlooked and not taken seriously for

lots of reasons: because of her gender, because of her poverty, because she’s an outcast,” Fridlund says.

History of Wolves started years ago as a short story that Fridlund wrote while working on her Ph.D. in literature and creative writing at the University of Southern California. “I was missing Minnesota, missing winter, and so I created this little world that allowed me to travel back,” she says. She published the story; in 2013, it won the McGinnis-Ritchie Award. Though Fridlund thought she was done with the piece, she found herself returning to it years later. “It was kind of a thought experiment,” she says.

That experiment yielded results most young writers can only dream of. In September, Fridlund advanced to the Man Booker short list; a month later, she flew to London with her husband and son for the awards ceremony. As a first-time novelist among fellow short-listers like Paul Auster and George Saunders, she was understandably nervous. “I was still getting used to the idea of this very private story finding its way in the world in a more public fashion,” she says.

Though Saunders snagged the prize, Fridlund was still honored to have had the committee take her book so seriously. “I worked a long time on it and I felt strongly about it,” she says, “but you never know when you write a book if it will have the impact that you intend.” —ERICA RIVERA

APRIL SELLERS

April Sellers creates performance pieces out of movement, text, songs, sequins, and politics. While she deals with heady stuff like the deconstruction of the sexual male-female binary, she aims to entertain. She views her approach

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Kory LaQuess Pullam



Shá Cage

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST, MARK VANCELEAVE

as similar to that of a standup comedian who pulls you in with humor, then swerves into something else.

"I entirely reject the idea that artists need to be community healers. We should be shining a light, wielding a megaphone," she declares. Through the April Sellers Dance Collective, she tells the stories of her generation and provides a platform for other voices, including those of transgender people and queer feminists.

"My responsibility is to pull in what's happening in the world and my own history—my feminism, my years as a tapper, all my lovers, all the costumes I've ever worn," she insists. While her work sparkles like a rhinestone, it also demonstrates a mature sense of craft and a deep-seated intelligence. Sellers is a risk-taker with a relentless passion for getting every detail just right.

Take *Animal Corridor*, her latest—and possibly greatest—foray into transgressive performance. Sellers wanted to face head-on what she terms, "the hairy alpha man inside me. I have a fuck-ton of aggression that I needed to explore."

Her performers must have it all, as Sellers asks a lot of them. They need to be skilled movers, singers, actors, and improvisers. But most of all they need to bring themselves to Sellers' rigorous process. She uses material from their lives, and asks them to play with prompts. "I want the performers to craft the dance in the moment, while they are running around," she says.

Purposeful running around seems to define Sellers. She's gaining a national reputation through residencies all over the country. With artists from Portland, Chicago, and New Jersey, she has launched GRUNT (Grass Roots US National Tour), a network designed to support artists who are emerging in their touring experience.

—LINDA SHAPIRO

KORY LAQUESS PULLAM

In June, Minnesota Playlist published a widely read critique of the Moving Company's *Refugia*, on stage at the Guthrie Theater. "From beginning to end," wrote the author, "it is a production that feels like yet another story that was told from the perspective of individuals who are in a bubble."

The essay carried particular weight as it came from a writer who was also a working actor who had an incentive to avoid ruffling feathers. Nonetheless, he felt it was important to speak out. "Looking back, I felt very vulnerable," says Kory LaQuess Pullam about his post, which helped spur the Guthrie to host a public conversation about the production.

"I feel like that's my responsibility," he reflects. "There is power in numbers, there is power in our voices."

The conversation demonstrated Pullam's impact on the Twin Cities theater scene.

A Texas native who moved to Minnesota in 2013, Pullam is also a teacher, a writer, and a comic. He's a co-founder of Blackout Improv, one of the country's few all-black improvisational comedy troupes. It's become a center for audiences and artists who want to be a part of the most essential conversations happening in the Twin Cities.

Pullam also brings the live-wire energy of an improv show to his scripted roles. This year, those have included a sexy ex in Penumbra's *Girl Shakes Loose*, an ardent socialist in Girl Friday's *Idiot's Delight*, and the Prince of Denmark himself in Park Square's *Hamlet*.

In addition to all of that, Pullam also leads his own theater company. Underdog Theatre has produced two well-received shows written by Pullam, and Rebecca Gilman's *Luna Gale* is coming up in March.



Miriam Must



Carly Van Veldhuizen

MATT BENYO, JEREMIE BARLOW PHOTOGRAPHY

"I don't fear failing," says Pullam. "Yes, directing and writing my own show might go very wrong. And who knows? Maybe it will. But if that's what it takes to make it happen, then I'm going to do it." —JAY GABLER

SHÁ CAGE

Shá Cage's ingenious creativity and sense of play come alive in work where she both creates and performs. This December, she debuted *Khephra: A Hip Hop Holiday Show*, combining storytelling, music, dance, and rap into a joyous coming-of-age tale.

"She's kind of fearless," says frequent collaborator Wendy Knox, artistic director of Frank Theatre. "She takes things further than you can ever imagine."

Cage also graced the Guthrie stage in two Shakespeare plays this year. She was impressive as the King of France in *King Lear*, demonstrating her command of classical text and subtle sense of humor, and later bore the emotionally heavy role of Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*.

"She adds to the room," says Joseph Haj, who directed her in both pieces. "She makes any room she's in a better room by virtue of her presence."

Cage's giving nature is seen in the broader community as well, especially as she lifts up underrepresented and marginalized voices. As the curator for the Catalyst series at the now-shuttered Intermedia Arts, Cage works tirelessly to support artists, especially artists of color.

Cage is helping the program continue, even without Intermedia. The Underbelly series, part of Catalyst, features emerging and underrepresented voices. Pangea hosted it this year, and the evening was curated by Akiko Ostlund.

"I have never seen her working solo," Ostlund says. "She always has community

in her mind. I think 'community' is the word she uses the most." —SHEILA REGAN

MIRIAM MUST

After three and a half decades, Red Eye Theatre is transitioning its leadership. *Life's Parade*, starring company manager Miriam Must, couldn't have been a better send-off. The ensemble production, conceived by artistic director Steve Busa and written by Katharine Sherman, was joyous and offbeat. In the play, muses help Must tell the story of a life's journey.

As a performer, Must brings an impish audacity to her work. Her openness, curiosity, surprising vocal choices, and movement often go against the grain. Over the years, Busa and Must have developed a shorthand vocabulary. "We share a simpatico idea about what is really doable onstage," he says.

Red Eye came together after Busa met Must while visiting the Twin Cities for a project with the Playwright's Center. After returning to New York, he and Must had many late-night conversations over the phone, dreaming up how to start a new theater company.

"[Must] is really excited about risk and possibility and experimentation," says Chantal Pavageaux, who participated in Red Eye's Isolated Acts series last spring. "[Failure] can be very uncomfortable for people, especially in rehearsal. Miriam can see the other side of the forest in a way." —SHEILA REGAN

CARLY VAN VELDHIJZEN

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COURTESY OF BADDIES, MENA BURNETTE

by Carly Van Veldhuizen. As founder of the award-winning Girl Friday creative group, Van Veldhuizen has been responsible for some of the most interesting custom installations in the Twin Cities, using nontraditional materials to create visual masterpieces.

"I look for materials that tell a story," Van Veldhuizen says. "I like texture, quantity, and movement that create a wow factor. I like to say our installations are purposeful art."

Some examples of that wow factor include a magnificent sprawling rainbow balloon wall that swallowed up the Mall of America's rotunda, a never-ending ring of red and white balloons in the lobby of the downtown Target, and a patriotic red, white, and blue balloon chain at the Fine Line.

While some might say Girl Friday has a signature look, Van Veldhuizen says she doesn't want to get pigeonholed.

"We're not balloon artists," she insists. "We use balloons, but that's not what we do exclusively."

Whether that means creating an origami-inspired paper backdrop for a Super Bowl pep rally, foam wigs and laser-cut logos for Regis Salon, or dangling chandeliers of paper leaves for a one-of-a-kind wedding, Girl Friday's work has been making a statement.

It's ironic that her pieces have been immortalized in countless wedding pics. "I was a wedding planner, and I sucked at it," Van Veldhuizen admits. "The design side—without all of the other details and planning—made more sense for me." —PATRICK STRAIT

BADDIES COMEDY CO.

Comedians Brandon Riddle, Pierre Douglas, and Bruce Williams opened their own comedy club, Baddies Comedy Co., in February with the goal of catering to black and urban comedy fans.

"We helped bridge that gap between urban and mainstream comedy locally," says Douglas of the trio's success. "For years there was tension that really didn't have to be there, but having a platform allowed us to invite comedians over and show them that we're all working toward one common goal."

Their efforts were noticed not only locally, but nationally. Kevin Hart filmed an episode of his Comedy Central show, *Hart of the City*, at Baddies with a handful of local talents, including Williams. It aired earlier this month.

"Becoming diverse in our material and appeal made it easier for us to work all



Harrison David Rivers

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

"We are anxious to do the piece again, this time as an homage," Thorson says.

Where and when the next iteration of *Still Life* will be performed is being negotiated. In the meantime, Thorson is choreographing a new work, *Public Love*, commissioned by the Walker Art Center to premiere in 2018. —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

HARRISON DAVID RIVERS

When Harrison David Rivers arrived in 2013 for a one-year fellowship at the Playwrights' Center, he didn't have a place to live. Then he met Josh Wilder, another fellow. After hours of conversation and wine, Wilder invited him to stay—for good. "You take the sofa, I'll take the bed," he told him. "We'll pay \$150 in rent, and we'll just be crazy writers together."

At 35, Rivers has already had the kind of success most playwrights only dream of: an MFA from Columbia, residencies with the best Off-Broadway theaters, premieres at the National Black Theatre in New York and the New Conservatory Theatre Center in San Francisco. In 2018, his work will hit Twin Cities stages for the first time with premieres at the History Theatre, Penumbra, and Theatre Latté Da.

As a black, queer playwright, he writes about lives on the margins in surprising ways. *And She Would Stand Like This* adapted a Greek tragedy by Euripides to explore themes of belonging, freedom, and illness in underground NYC drag culture.

Rivers often leaves key questions unanswered, such as the time period or a character's age, in his drafts. While this can bedevil directors and actors, Rivers holds his ground as the play is workshopped. Watching them navigate the story's gaps reveals interesting discords that he can hone in future drafts. "If I tell you everything," he says, "then what did we collaborate on?"

For *This Bitter Earth*, which comes to Penumbra in May, Rivers was commissioned to write about political violence against black male bodies. Instead, he wrote a love story, and found a way to weave it into the Black Lives Matter movement. It's his most personal play to date.

After moving in with Wilder, Rivers met his husband a few weeks later. On a recent trip to New York, he retrieved the last of his belongings: Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, a box of notebooks, and a treasured stuffed animal. —KIP DOOLEY

types of rooms," Douglas continues. "It's allowed us to become comfortable in the moment." —PATRICK STRAIT

MORGAN THORSON

Concepts of extinction, time, endurance, and agency on the part of both dancers and audience thread through iterations of choreographer Morgan Thorson's *Still Life* series, the most recent of which occurred at the Cowles Center in March. During that 90-minute version, the audience sat onstage for a work of charming, disarming, alarming, and insouciant choreography.

There were animal sounds, vocal outbursts, moments of stillness and freneticism, and moves from yoga, cheerleading, and children's games. The piece was underscored by Sxip Shirey's cinematic soundscape and illuminated by lighting designer Lenore Doxsee.

In 2015, the work was performed over a three-month period in the galleries of the Weisman Art Museum. For the 2017 version, Thorson instructed the dancers "to kill the choreography," which meant they could make changes and insert their own spontaneous responses. That included interacting with one another and interacting with the audience. It was a risky proposition.

Still Life works as a memorial to the ecological disasters and species extinctions occurring in real time. After the Cowles performance, however, the dance became a memorial of another kind. On May 19, Doxsee died of ovarian cancer.

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THE MYTH OF SISYPHUS

For the guy behind the funniest taproom in Minneapolis, life wasn't always full of laughs

BY EMILY CASSEL

If you know Sisyphus, you know it as the Twin Cities' comedy brewery.

Co-founder Sam Harriman built it to be. It has those oddly low taproom ceilings—far too shallow to fit massive brew tanks, but just the right height for drawing the eye to the stage during an intimate open mic. There's the comedy room itself, added last year, an 88-person club that rivals some of the best standup spaces in town. And then, there are the cheekily named beers: The First Beer We Brewed; The First Beer We Distributed; Safe Lady, a peanut butter stout that pokes fun at Dangerous Man's beloved Peanut But-

ter Porter; Isaac the Fax Man, a riff on Surly's Todd the Axe Man.

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Maybe you've wondered, then, about the brewery's namesake. It's an incongruous choice: Sisyphus, the king who in Greek mythology is sentenced to eternally push a huge boulder up a hill only to watch it roll down again as punishment for his hubris and deceit. The tale isn't exactly a barrel of laughs.

"When I picked the name initially, one of my MBA advisors was like, 'You probably should change this,'" Harriman says. "I didn't tell anybody, but it was like, I can't change it. This is the name. And I hope I get to the point someday where I will share with our customers and the Minneapolis community why."

He's been asked about it dozens of times since the taproom opened in 2014, and for years, he's brushed the question aside with a variation on a stock response: "We have a small brew system, so we are like Sisyphus, always brewing."

It's not like that answer is a lie. Running a brewery—especially one that doubles as a comedy club—is a Sisyphean task. Kegs are tapped; kegs are kicked. When comedian Ryan O'Flanagan takes the stage



Sam Harriman
and his dog, Albert

TONY NELSON

on a Friday night in November, the club swells with people, their laughter filling the room, their glasses clattering tables. But after the set ends and everyone spills out, Harriman and co. don't have much time before the late show starts. He darts out from behind the bar, head bobbing beneath a knit Indeed Brewing beanie, moving purposefully between the packed-in tables as he fills a bus bin with empty glasses and Pizza Lucé boxes. He and his staff will do it all over again after the second set, and again and again over the course of the weekend. And the next one.

So yes. That well-established reply works. It just doesn't tell the whole story. Harriman has since decided he's ready to share the rest. On a cold December afternoon, seated in a sun-drenched corner booth while his dog, a mutt named Albert, wriggles around beneath the table, Harriman explains that Sisyphus' non-negotiable name is actually a reference to the 1942 Albert Camus essay "The Myth of Sisyphus." In it, Camus addresses the futility of existence, the absurdity of life—and suicide. "There is only one true philosophical problem, and that is suicide," the

French philosopher begins (more or less, depending on your translation). "Deciding whether or not life is worth living is to answer the fundamental question in philosophy. All other questions follow from that."

Harriman, it turns out, spent years battling depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. He read Camus' essay during his junior year of college, and it was one of the first times he remembers feeling understood. "In hindsight, depression and anxiety were huge for me," he says now. "At a certain point... I think the depression started to fade. But definitely, middle school through college, I was very depressed. Suicidal thoughts every day. 'The Myth of Sisyphus' was the book that made me reframe my view of my depression."

Harriman was raised in a family where discussing mental health wasn't an option. He went to medical school at the urging of his parents, and eventually, realizing that it was contributing to his depression, decided to get an MBA instead. Taking his future into his own hands helped—for a while. But his mental health started to worsen when he graduated. "At a certain point, my anxiety got so bad that I was agoraphobic—afraid to leave the house—for six weeks," he says.

It was during this time that Harriman found a podcast called *The Mental Illness Happy Hour*, in which host Paul Gilmartin invites guests to speak with unflinching honesty about depression, addiction, sex, compulsions, childhood trauma. Harriman listened to the first five episodes back to back. And he realized: He needed help. "You have to hit a bottom, I think, at a certain point," he says. "Or at least recognize that you're headed towards a bottom. For me, it was like, I'm getting anxiety about going to Target to buy items I need to live. I'm 26, 27 at that time—I was like... I can't do this for the rest of my life. That was when I finally decided to get counseling."

Gradually, by talking through his issues, he started to regain control. Once afraid to leave the house, Harriman, along with

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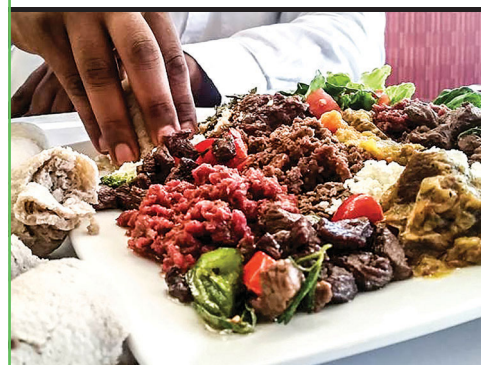


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his partner, cashed in his retirement funds and bought the 7,500-foot space near Loring Park that would eventually become their brewery.

Asked why he decided to wait before going public with his struggle, well: “Anxious guy opens suicide awareness taproom!” Harriman laughs in his best TV news anchor voice. “Nobody would come to that, I don’t think. And that’s part of the problem with our culture. But I chose the name because I want to help fight the stigma that exists in our country. I view that as part of my responsibility in picking the name.”

Today, he’s trying to be upfront about it. In May, Harriman invited Gilmartin to the Sisyphus stage for a live taping of *Mental Illness Happy Hour*. Seated in front of 80-plus people, in the room he says wouldn’t exist without the podcast, Harriman first spoke about his challenges publicly. Around the same time, he quietly updated the Sisyphus website. If you head to the brewery’s “About” page looking for the hours or address, you’ll instead find a 700-word essay from Harriman in which he muses on Camus, depression, and how we can make the most of our time here on earth.

And earlier this year, Sisyphus brewed a charity beer—“For NAMI, Nah Mean?”—to benefit the Minnesota chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a grassroots advocacy group that provides education, support, and health services to those who are struggling with mental illness and to their families. “There were just tons of people coming up to us when we tapped that beer: ‘Thank you for doing this,’ ‘This is so unexpected from a taproom,’” Harriman says.

Sisyphus isn’t the only area brewery working to end the stigma surrounding mental health. Last year, Fulton released Grog, a New England IPA honoring employee Greg Sincheff, who lost his battle with depression in November 2016. A dollar from each taproom sale of the brew—which returned this year under a new name, Specter—went to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

“Everybody knows somebody, right?” Harriman asks. “The more that people talk about it, the better it’s going to get over time.” It’s why he’s no longer shy about sharing his own journey, why Gilmartin will be back in April for another podcast taping, something they hope to do twice a year. And his essay isn’t going anywhere.

“Sisyphus is each of us. The rock is the absurdity of the universe. The confrontation between the meaninglessness of a single life in an infinite universe,” he writes. “There is so much to humanity that gets lost in the scale of the universe. There is music, love, laughter, food, dancing, and of course, beer.”



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MIDNITE EXPRESS, AND MORE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

OFFICIAL BIG TURN MUSIC
FESTIVAL PRE-PARTY FT.
GENERAL B AND THE WIZ
W/ TABAH, LYDIA LIZA
FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

THE ANNUAL BLOWOUT FT.
BIRTHDAY SUITS, SHADOW IN
THE CRACKS, FURY THINGS
SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

CHARLIE PARR
JANUARY SUNDAY RESIDENCY
W/ SUPERIOR SIREN
SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

THE CACTUS BLOSSOMS
RESIDENCY
MONDAY, JANUARY 8

FLOBOTS
W/ TROPIDELIC
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10

UP NEXT PALACE THEATRE

JAN
13
**BIG HEAD TODD
AND THE MONSTERS**
W/ RONNIE BAKER BROOKS

JAN
20
RED BULL CRASHED ICE AFTERPARTY
W/ PAPER DIAMOND, SHREDDERS,
MIKE 2600

FEB
09 + 10
PORTUGAL. THE MAN
W/ TWIN PEAKS

FEB
22
GALACTIC WITH LETTUCE

FEB
23
JUDAH & THE LION
GOING TO MARS TOUR
W/ COLONY HOUSE, TALL HEIGHTS

FEB
24
WALK THE MOON
W/ COMPANY OF THIEVES

MAR
02
MIGUEL
W/ SiR, NONCHALANT SAVANT

MAR
17
**AN EVENING WITH
GLEN HANSARD**

UP NEXT OTHER VENUES

DOROTHY
FREEDOM TOUR 2018
FINE LINE
FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

TENNIS
W/ OVERCOATS
FINE LINE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 11

ALEX AIONO
FEELS LIKE TOUR 2018
W/ TRINIDAD CARDONA
THE CEDAR
SATURDAY, JANUARY 13

TRIBAL SEEDS
ROOTS PARTY
W/ THE GREEN, SAMMY J,
LEILANI WOLFGRAMM
THE CABOOZE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

DESTROYER
W/ MEGA BOG
FINE LINE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

**DAVE SIMONETT AND
BENSON RAMSEY**
ICEHOUSE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

RORY SCOVEL IN
A PROPER GANDER TOUR
W/ ZACH MARTINA
THE CEDAR
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

MAKO
BREATHE TOUR
FINE LINE
SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

**JOSH RITTER & THE
ROYAL CITY BAND**
FITZGERALD THEATER
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

KIMBRA
THE PRIMAL HEART TOUR
W/ KING, ARC IRIS
THE CEDAR
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5

**BENJAMIN
CLEMENTINE**
FINE LINE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

POPPY.COMPUTER
TOUR 2018
THE CEDAR
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

ENTER SHIKARI
W/ SINGLE MOTHERS, MILK TEETH
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

EMANCIPATOR
ENSEMBLE
'BARALKU' TOUR
FINE LINE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

LOTUS
W/ MARVEL YEARS
FINE LINE
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

ROSTAM
W/ JOY AGAIN
FINE LINE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

A LIST

FRIDAY Crazy Happy New Year at Phoenix Theater **P. 23** **SATURDAY** Lizz Winstead rips 2017 a new one **P. 23** **SUNDAY** Six ways to kick 2017 out the door **P. 25**

WEDNESDAY 12.27

COMEDY/NYE

FUNNIER THAN NATE ABSHIRE FEATURING BRYAN MILLER

ACME COMEDY CO.

"This year I've been focusing more on just doing standup," says comedian Nate Abshire. "I'm just doing standup now, and it actually has made me a lot happier to just do what I do." It's not that he's turning down work. "I feel like I used to get stressed out about trying to get my next TV credit and all that. I think that stuff is nice, but I'm trying to focus on each set and being in the moment because what I love about standup is the connection you get with all these people." Nowadays, Abshire has a new mindset. "I believe we weren't meant to have all these jobs and work and stuff. I think that unemployment is the natural state of man." He'll be taking the stage alongside friendly rival (and City Pages contributor) Bryan Miller. 18+. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday; 10:30 p.m. Friday through Sunday. \$15-\$25. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Sunday —P.F. WILSON**

SHIT-TALKING

FUCK 2017: A ROAST OF 2017

TURF CLUB

In 2017, everybody turned out to be a sexual predator, the president tried (and still is trying) to get the country blown up by "Little Rocket Man," and the new Eminem album was horrible. Yeah, 2017 was a real dumpster fire... which is unfortunate as this time last year many thought that 2016 was the worst. We were so cute, so naive. This Wednesday, Rana May and Drew Janda will once again lead a hilarious lineup of comics—including Carly Wicks, Mary Jo Pehl, Tommy Ryman, Moe Yaqub, Jordan Casner, Grace Thomas, and John Gebratatosé—as they reflect on how 2017 was the year we learned that Garrison Keillor was a pervy tool, Kevin Spacey's house of cards came crashing down for real, and that kid who broke our hearts crying over bullying turned out to be the spawn of white supremacists. DJ Paper



Flip Phone drags 2017 out of First Avenue with a glam and grungy party.

DARIN KAMNETZ

Sleeves will do his best to keep things upbeat despite the fact that this is one part comedy show, one part funeral, and one part intervention. Come laugh, cry, get drunk, and do your best to put this year in the rearview before we move on to whatever new horrors await us in 2018. 21+. 7:30 p.m. \$7. 1601 University Ave. W., St. Paul; 651-647-0486. **—PATRICK STRAIT**

THEATER

THE 2017 MINNESOTA YEAR-IN-REVIEW QUIZ SHOW

BRYANT-LAKE BOWL THEATER

Who was the MVP of the WNBA Finals this year? What exactly is Bitcoin? What was the movie called where the Rock took off his shirt? (Trick question: All of them. Animated ones, too.) If you love trivia, pop culture, and LOLs, Tane Danger and Dennis Curley from the Theater of Public Policy have you covered. They'll be putting a celebrity panel of six of their funniest friends to the test, quizzing them on the biggest events of the past year in Minnesota and beyond. With swamp draining, public protests, Netflix binges, and

celebrity feuds to cover, the hosts will test their knowledge while looking back on the biggest events of the past 12 months. As with game shows like *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me...* or *Q.I.*, you'll laugh, think, and cringe along with the contestants. Even if there are no prizes, there's no greater feeling than knowing the answer to a meaningless question about the latest *Fast & Furious* movie. 7 p.m. \$15. 810 W. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-825-3737. **—PATRICK STRAIT**

COMEDY/NYE

STEVE SIMEONE

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

"I don't exactly know what audiences want," admits comedian Steve Simeone, "but I know what I like to do and I just like to look for the little things in life that can be celebrated, because it's so easy now to be negative." Simeone wants to talk about what's good in life. "What makes life worth living," he adds. "Let's put politics aside for a second and recognize each other's humanity and what we have in common. And the best things in life are these shared moments."

Simeone is known for talking about nostalgia, but that's just a leaping-off point. "These things were great when you were a kid, but it's even better now, because you can still celebrate them as an adult." A bit he does on ordering pizza is an example. "It's about how when I was a kid that was a huge treat. Friday night pizza night. It was like getting Christmas delivered to your house." 16+. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday; 9 p.m. Sunday. \$13-\$55.95. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday —P.F. WILSON**

THURSDAY 12.28

BURLESQUE/NYE

NEW YEAR'S NOIRE

THE LAB THEATER

Make your New Year's appropriately lavish by treating yourself to some luscious moves, shimmering spectacle, stunning feats, and a few laughs. New Year's Noire will take over the Lab Theater for four nights, with emcee



Perle Noire elegantly strips down the New Year.

CLUBESQUE

Nadine DuBois holding court at each installment. To produce the engagement, DuBois partnered with Electra Cute and New York-based burlesque performer Perle Noire. She'll be performing along with House of Noire "gems" Poison Ivory and Pearls Daily each night. Enjoy the elegance, seduction, top-tier talent, and innuendo all the way into 2018 as bawdy jokes, sexy dancing, scintillating costumes, and ambience to die for combine for a divine experience. Premium cocktail table seats include a meet-and-greet photo opportunity with the cast after the show. 8 p.m. Thursday through Sunday. \$20-\$40; \$30-\$60 VIP. 700 First St. N., Minneapolis; 612-333-3377. **Through Sunday** —**SHEILA REGAN**

COMEDY/NYE

DAVE WILLIAMSON

JOKE JOINT COMEDY CLUB

"When I was a kid, I didn't know it was a job path you could have," says Dave Williamson of a career in standup comedy. "I thought it was something on TV that people lucked into. But I liked being the funny guy in high school and college." Williamson, who grew up in Miami, was an only child, but he never lacked an audience. "We used to have tons of family and friends over to the house for dinner all the time. I think that led me down a path too because I'd watch my Italian mother tell all these stories and be loud and funny. And my grandmother was always a great exaggerator, so I grew up around a bunch of great storytellers." Williamson relocated to Los Angeles a few years into his standup career. "I felt like I'd done everything I could do in Florida.... It's hard to tour when you're that far south." New York wasn't an option. "There was no way I was going to talk my wife into going to New York. We're a tropical climate kind of people." 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Sunday; 9:45 p.m. Friday through Sunday. \$14-\$29. 801

Sibley Memorial Hwy., Lilydale; 651-330-9078. **Through Sunday** —**P.F. WILSON**

FRIDAY 12.29

NYE/THEATER

HAPPY CRAZY NEW YEAR 7

PHOENIX THEATER

Happy Crazy New Year is back again with a wild, interactive show and party. This year's installment tells the story of a nightclub that may have to close after its star, Mister Snuffles, passes away. It's a production filled with "terrible photoshop, overly elaborate life insurance extortion schemes, dancing, slapstick, and dogs." In addition to the gripping pup-related plot, an impromptu dance party can spring up at any moment. Literally. Anyone in the audience is welcome to head onstage at any time during the show to click the "Dance Party Button," sending the cast, crew, and audience into a one-minute whirlwind of movement. "These shows are insane," says cast member Garrett Vollmer. "Everything starts pretty normal, and then an hour later I'm backstage, dressed as the pope, getting my hair cut by an audience member." Sounds like a good time. Tickets are available at dangerousproductions.org. All ages. 9:30 p.m. Friday through Sunday. \$13-\$18. 2605 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-377-2285. **Through Sunday** —**JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

SATURDAY 12.30

COMEDY/NYE

LIZZ WINSTEAD IN 2017: THE GREATEST SH*T SHOW ON EARTH

THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

In our troubling times, humor can be hard to find, which is precisely why Lizz Winstead's annual recaps are so fulfilling.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 ►

CABOOZE

18+ SHOW



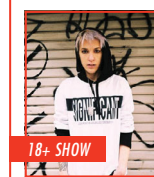
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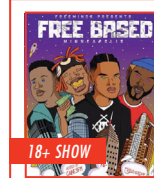
NEW YEAR'S EVE EDITION
DECEMBER 31



SNOWBALL DANCE PARTY
DECEMBER 30



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MUSIC VIDEO RELEASE PARTY
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JANUARY 5



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RIO NIDO
DECEMBER 27



THE NEW STANDARDS
DECEMBER 31



DAVINA AND THE VAGABONDS
JANUARY 1



JONATHA BROOKE
JANUARY 4



REBIRTH BRASS BAND
JANUARY 5-6



WE CAN BE HEROES: DAVID BOWIE TRIBUTE
JANUARY 8-9

NEW YEAR'S EVE AT VIEUX CARRÉ



DINNER SHOW SOUTHSIDE ACES
6 PM • \$70/\$75
*includes dinner, music, tax, gratuity



COCKTAIL SHOW JOYANN PARKER
10:30 PM • \$30
*includes music and midnight bubbly

DECEMBER 31



WEE WILLIE WALKER
JANUARY 10



SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS
JANUARY 11-12



LARRY LONG PRESENTS
AMERICAN ROOTS REVUE
HALEY, CORY WONG, ANTWAUN STANLEY, LARRY LONG & THE HORNHEADS
JANUARY 13



KAUMAKAIWA KANAKA'OLE
w/ SHAWN PIMENTAL
JANUARY 15



ROY HARGROVE QUINTET
JANUARY 16-17



TRACY NELSON AND THE BEL AIRS
JANUARY 18



NICHOLAS DAVID AND THE FEELIN' BAND
JANUARY 19



HUUN HUUR TU
JANUARY 20



ROBERTA GAMBARINI
w/ CYRUS CHESTNUT
JANUARY 21-22



AL JARDINE
A POSTCARD FROM CALIFORNIA
JANUARY 23-24

NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THE DAKOTA



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DECEMBER 31



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JANUARY 27



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JANUARY 28



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CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ►

The homegrown comic and co-creator (along with Madeline Smithberg) of *The Daily Show* has an instinct for absurdities, insightfully drawing forth the sublimely ridiculous nature of our dystopian moment. Joined by musical guest Sam Breckenridge, Winstead will brave the ludicrous depths of 2017, seeking laughter in the events that have left so many of us feeling utterly shell-shocked. Indeed, with each passing day bringing the promise of another outrage, Winstead will undoubtedly need to call upon all of her skills as a humorist, allaying exhaustion with levity and perhaps even shoring up a dogged degree of optimism for the approaching year. All ages. 2 p.m. Saturday; 7:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. \$45/\$55; \$65 VIP. 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674. **Through Sunday —BRAD RICHASON**

SUNDAY 12.31

COMEDY/NYE

EAST COAST STYLE NEW YEAR'S EVE COMEDY SHOW

SISYPHUS BREWING

If you're someone who loves comedy, celebrations, and reasonable bedtimes, Maggie Faris is your girl. For the fourth year in a row, Faris will host her East Coast Style Comedy Show alongside comedians Jeff Pfoer, Chloe Radcliffe, and Kate Anderson. The thing that makes this happening great is that they do the full-blown New Year's hoopla on the East Coast clock. That means you're throwing confetti and tongue-kissing strangers at 11 p.m. here in Minnesota. You'll still have time to get home, wash the last of 2017 off yourself, and snuggle into your warm bed before the clock hits midnight. As in past years, there will be booty prizes and beer (because, you know, Sisyphus is a brewery). However,

what makes this year different is that it will also serve as a CD-release party for Faris, who will be celebrating her sophomore album, *A Dingus Among Us*. For those who feel like 11 p.m. is still too late but want to celebrate like the cool kids, there is also an early show with all the pomp and circumstance, so you can get home and relieve your babysitter before the primetime New Year's Eve rates kick in. Tickets and more info can be found at www.brownpapertickets.com. 21+. 7 and 9 p.m. \$25. 712 Ontario Ave. W., Minneapolis; 612-321-8324. **—PATRICK STRAIT**

FILM

A-LIST ONLY

TRYLON CINEMA

When Trylon microcinema opened in 2009, success was far from a sure thing. Defying skeptics, the shoebox theater proved a resounding success by offering an intelligently curated blend of the familiar and the obscure, drawing upon big-budget Hollywood fare, scrappy independent productions, and international creations. The space underwent extensive renovations last summer to expand capacity. Dropping the "micro" from its moniker, the newly re-christened Trylon Cinema is celebrating with A-List Only, a nine-film series consisting of previously screened classics, all of which sold out over their earlier runs. That includes *Charade* (1963), *All About Eve* (1950), *Mulholland Drive* (2001), *The Big Sleep* (1946), *Clue* (1985), *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *La Dolce Vita* (1960), *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), and *Barry Lyndon* (1975). Whether viewing these works for the first time or the 50th, there's no finer environment to witness their mastery than within this oasis of cinema. Visit www.trylon.org for schedule. \$8. 3258 Minnehaha Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-424-5468. **Through January 30, 2018 —BRAD RICHASON**

NYE/PARTY

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

HEWING HOTEL

These days, the world is a confusing place. Hewing Hotel's *Alice in Wonderland*-themed party, Down the Rabbit Hole, should also be confusing—but in a good way. During this strange soirée, revelers will enjoy a quirky atmosphere with much to puzzle over, as contortionists and acrobats share their mind-boggling talents. Enter Mad Tea Party-mode with specialty cocktails and snack on appetizers big and small. Neo-soul group Nooky Jones will take the stage for live music, and DJ Sarah White will spin tunes. There will also be a champagne toast at midnight. Be sure to check out package deals if you'd like to spend the night in Wonderland. Tickets and more info at www.eventbrite.com. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$100. 300 N. Washington Ave., Minneapolis; 866-501-3300. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

NYE/LGBTQ

FLIP PHONE PRESENTS: 2018 - THE PARTY

FIRST AVENUE

This year was a gloomy one. We might as well celebrate the death of 2017 with a seedy, glam, and raucous party. Flip Phone's end-of-year bash at First Avenue will be filled with drag, music, dancing, and booze. Season-three winner Raja and two-time runner up Raven from *RuPaul's Drag Race* will be performing

onstage, and special guests include Julia Starr, Tygra Slarii, and Magic Dyke. DBaz will provide music. This shindig should be a sure bet for folks looking for an affordable but super fun night out. 18+. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$30/\$35 doors; \$50 VIP. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

NYE/PARTIES

GOLD PARTY/POLYNESIAN PASSPORT

BETTY DANGER'S/PSYCHO SUZI'S

Looking for a party that is a little bit glam, a little campy, and pretty cheap? Consider hitting up Betty Danger's Country Club or its sister bar, Psycho Suzi's Motor Lounge. At Betty Danger's (2501 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-315-4997), \$45 scores you three cocktails of your choice and a champagne toast at midnight. As you count down the hours, take a ride on the Ferris wheel, dance to disco tunes from DJ Shiek, and snap photos in Betty's super photogenic space. Gold attire is encouraged here. Meanwhile, over at Psycho Suzi's (1900 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-788-9069), \$45 gets you four drinks. Choose from the tiki menu or a premium cocktail, beer, or wine. Order up some food or take to the dance floor as DJs Brownie and Strangelove entertain. Stop by the photobooth to commemorate the evening, even if things get a little warm and fuzzy toward the end. 21+. 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. \$45. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

NYE/SPORTS

NEW YEAR'S EVE FAMILY-FRIENDLY CELEBRATION

AFTON ALPS

The words "family-friendly" get tossed around pretty loosely when it comes to New Year's Eve. Yes, you can let your kids run wild through a TGI Friday's for three hours while you get blasted on mudslides, but that's not really family nor friendly. Afton Alps is hosting its annual New Year's Eve celebration, an event that is legitimately fun for families. Shred the slopes throughout the day, then enjoy evening happenings including hillside fireworks, a massive bonfire, food specials, a bounce house, and s'mores. For the grownups, there will be live music from Triple Dog Dare (which is the most family-friendly band name ever) from 9 p.m. until 12:30 a.m., and the ski lifts will be up and running until the ball drops at midnight. To commemorate the epic evening, you'll earn a "Party Like It's 1999" pin just for riding the lift. No matter what your definition of "family-friendly" is, there's going to be something you and your kids will enjoy at Afton Alps. Plus, TGI Friday's will still be there all year long. 9:30 a.m. to midnight. Admission to this event is included with lift tickets. 6600 Peller Ave. S., Hastings; 651-436-5245. **—PATRICK STRAIT**



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'THE SHAPE OF WATER'

Tenderness, friendship, and falling in love with a magical fish man



Sally Hawkins and Octavia Spencer

COURTESY OF FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

BY TONY LIBERA

The *Shape of Water* is many things: a creature feature, a Cold War thriller, and above all else, an enchanting mid-century fairy tale.

While the idea of a woman falling for a magical fish man may seem bizarre at first blush (not to mention sexually disturbing), we quickly settle into the fantastic story that director Guillermo del Toro crafts here. After all, in a narrative tradition teeming with frog-kissing, beauties, beasts, and the like, is this really any weirder than your classic folk tale?

It's the early 1960s. Sally Hawkins plays Elisa Esposito, a janitor in a military facility who lost her ability to speak at a young age. Her life is one of routine: She wakes up, hard boils some eggs, masturbates in the bathtub, and takes the bus to work. She enjoys watching old movies with her neighbor, Giles (Richard Jenkins), a down-on-his-luck artist who's trying to get his old ad agency to buy some work.

One day while Elisa and her friend Zelda (Octavia Spencer) are cleaning up at the facility, a suit-and-tie by the name of Richard Strickland (Michael Shannon)

shows up with some odd cargo. Elisa discovers the aforementioned Amphibious Man (Doug Jones) and soon thereafter falls in love.

Given the inhuman discovery at the center of this movie, del Toro certainly could have opted for a massive scope. Instead, he focuses on smaller details. Though we get elements of a Cold War backdrop and bigger forces at work, this narrowed vision allows for the exploration of more intimate themes.

The Shape of Water ponders love, friendship, otherness—contrasting the sweetness of something bizarre and ostensibly wrong with the superficial “correctness” of traditional American life. Government goon Strickland has kids and a wife, the latter of whom he silences mid-coitus with an increasingly necrotic hand. Zelda cooks dinner after a long day mopping, and her husband can't so much as get out of his chair to answer the door.

Meanwhile, Elisa feels marginalized because of her inability to speak, and Giles finds himself getting booted from a “family restaurant” because he's gay.

Del Toro's juxtapositions are simple but effective. And the cast's fleshing out

THE SHAPE OF WATER
directed by Guillermo del Toro
now showing, area theaters

of such measured beats takes this movie beyond its script. Hawkins conveys so much without saying a word, and her real-life sign language undertaking is impressive.

Shannon is phenomenal as always in what could have been a pretty two-dimensional role. He's the kind of person whose sinisterness is rooted in a conviction of his own rightness, and that makes him all the more terrifying.

Del Toro also pulls off a deft trick with the character of Dr. Hoffstetler (Michael Stuhlbarg), a scientist and Russian mole whose actions dissolve broader allegiances to highlight the unimportance of nationality when it comes to matters of right and wrong, the different and those who would seek to destroy them.

The Shape of Water does have a rather flat tone, so for some the stakes may not pay off—though anything showier may have detracted from the tenderness present. What we have here is a delicate tale, and del Toro treats it with clever direction and a soft touch. **C**

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FUNNIER THAN NATE ABSHIRE
feat. Bryan Miller

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Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950 is a project conceived by the Cisneros Fontanals Fundación Para Las Artes (CIFO Europa) and the Cisneros Fontanals Arts Foundation, CIFO USA; and curated by Gerardo Mosquera, René Francisco Rodríguez, and Elsa Vega. The exhibition is organized in partnership with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

The exhibition is made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor.



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Major support for the exhibition is provided by the Ford Foundation, the Diane and Bruce Halle Foundation, and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional generous support is provided by Ella Fontanals-Cisneros.

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STREET *Style*

IN FROM THE COLD Mia's Third Thursday: Hello Winter on December 21. **BY AMY GEE**



ISABEL FAJARDO

24, MARKETING COORDINATOR

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Favorite item in your wardrobe?

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Trend you're looking forward to in 2018:

Slip dresses.



MARQUITA RYAN

44, MANAGER AT HENNEPIN COUNTY

What are you wearing?

L.A.M.B. clutch, 3.1 Phillip Lim shoes, Banana Republic leather pants, Free People jacket, GAP shirt.

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Favorite item in your wardrobe?

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Trend you're looking forward to in 2018:

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CAROLYN STUEER

25, STUDENT

What are you wearing?

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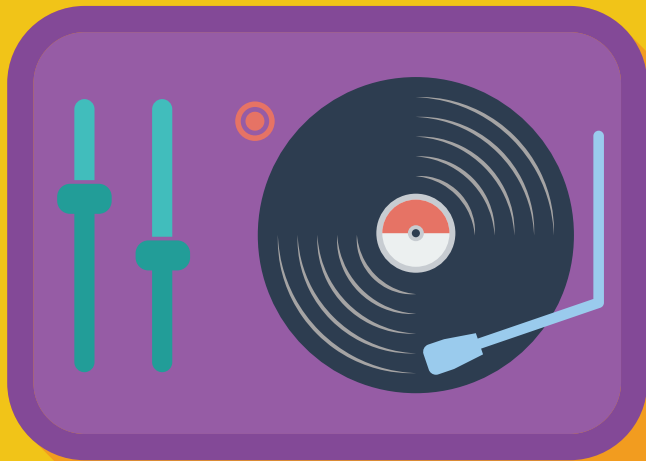
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NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

Newly divorced, Dave Pirner remains in a committed relationship with Soul Asylum

BY ERICA RIVERA

“This is where the anti-magic happens,” Dave Pirner says as he lopes into his long-time studio at City Sound in northeast Minneapolis.

With his stringy, dirty blond hair, the 53-year-old Soul Asylum frontman looks like an aged teen who slept in his clothes and fell into unlaced black high tops with the tongues sticking out. Red boxers bulge out of his ripped-knee jeans. The newest item of apparel on him is probably his T-shirt from the Pinball Bar (est. 2017). His body is still boyishly lanky but his unshaved face is lined and ruddy.

The space is depressing: windowless and crowded with mic stands and snare drums, lit with too few fluorescent bulbs, musty-smelling. One wall is packed with file boxes and a Barack Obama cut-out. A demented rabbit piñata hangs from the ceiling. Covering the other walls are two backdrops painted on canvas, one of the background from the *Grave Dancers Union* album. The scent of pot and sounds of another band practicing waft in from an adjacent studio.

Pirner has come a long way since his days as a 31-year-old dreadlocked, pissing-in-a-vase, Winona Ryder-dating dude who told Rolling Stone, “I would like to have the coup of just having been in a great rock band that nobody cares about anymore.”

Or maybe he hasn’t. Maybe he’s come full circle. He doesn’t urinate on or in anything during this interview, but he does (unintentionally) moon me when he bends over to search for a pack of Parliament cigarettes in his overcoat pocket, ashes said cigs on the dishwater-colored carpet even though there is an ashtray within reach, and, when asked what he does during his downtime, replies, “Jerk off.” He’s still foul-mouthed and, he says, “fucking pissed as shit about everything.”

And yet, on this snowy Wednesday afternoon, Pirner seems deeply relaxed. Sitting cross-legged on a folding chair, he avoids eye contact. His voice is low, slow, and gravelly as he explains that he’s been spending more time in “fuckin’ Uptown”



Dave Pirner

TONY NELSON

lately due to his recent divorce from the mother of his 14-year-old son, Eli.

“There was a certain sense of ‘a kid should have a mom and a dad and I guess they should be married,’” Pirner says of his decision to wed. “It didn’t really make any difference to me one way or the other, to be honest with you. I don’t really have any regrets. I tried my hardest and I sucked at it. That’s probably why I didn’t want to get married. I knew I wouldn’t be good at it.”

Pirner is unable to articulate what being “good” or “bad” at marriage looks like. When asked what prompted the divorce, he laughs and says, “You might have to ask my ex about that. I don’t know.”

Pirner lived in New Orleans for the past 16 years, and his ex-wife and son are still there. “The biggest thorn in my side is that I miss my kid,” he says. “It is very difficult to be on the road and have a family. At least, for me. Which I put off, like, forever. It came very late in my life that I had a family. And I don’t anymore.”

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Perhaps no marriage could have competed with Pirner’s lifelong love for music. Pirner was raised by a “jazz hound” father with fantasies of becoming Gene Krupa and a mother who gave up her artistic dreams to care for the family. Pirner recalls that she could “play the fuck” out of “The Third Man Theme” on piano and had buckets of 45s in the basement. His parents sang in church and gifted him a toy drum set when he was little. In elementary school, he took up the trumpet, and he started his first punk band, the Shitz, in 1980 while attending West High School.

He formed Loud Fast Rules with guitarist Dan Murphy and bassist Karl Mueller a year later; initially the drummer, Pirner stepped up front once Pat Morley took over behind the kit. Renamed Soul Asylum, the band helped power the Minneapolis rock

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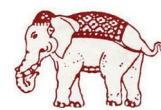
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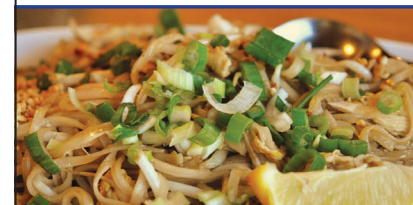
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MUSIC

scene to national acclaim in the '80s. While scene-mates the Replacements and Hüsker Dü had disbanded before the early-'90s alt-rock boom, Soul Asylum landed on Columbia, where their 1992 album *Grave Dancers Union* went multi-platinum and its hit single "Runaway Train" became inescapable. The band played at President Bill Clinton's request twice in 1993: at the Inaugural Ball and later that year on the South Lawn of the White House. Soul Asylum made the late-night show rounds and graced covers of Rolling Stone in 1993 and 1995. They played nearly 300 shows a year.

And yet, looking back, Pirner describes the band's glory days as a "shit show" and a "calamity of craziness." He'd get butterflies before performances, then would "scream like a motherfucker" onstage and insult the audience. "Every show was like a fight," he says. "When you're coming from punk rock, you're a fuck-up pretty much. You're an outsider. I had such a huge defense mechanism when I started out that I just fucking hated everything. That was sort of the rationale for pushing forward. We used to just go, 'We're going to make everybody hate us.' And that's kind of what you do: piss people off."

But somehow, Soul Asylum survived. Now, 36 years and 12 albums later, Pirner is the only remaining original member. (The band's current lineup is rounded out by guitarist Ryan Smith, bassist Winston Royce, and drummer Michael Bland.) "It just seems seasoned and beat up and pushed around and chewed up and spit out and it's been through a lot of shit," Pirner says of Soul Asylum's music today. "That just gives it that much more character and history and wisdom."

Pirner doesn't aim to enrage the audience anymore; he'd rather invoke joy—even if that means playing "Runaway Train" for the umpteenth time. "You don't want people coming to a Soul Asylum show and going, 'Wow. Those dudes look tired and old,'" Pirner says.

But the life of a touring musician can be hell on relationships. Pirner doesn't get to see his "beautiful boy" as often as he'd like, though his admiration for Eli is obvious. He describes his son as "pretty fuckin' evolved." He's fluent in French, is a food snob, likes to freestyle on drums, and is a hip-hop fan who introduced Pirner to the music of Kendrick Lamar. Still, Pirner remembers how heartbreaking it was to hear his son say, "I'm used to you being gone."

In the absence of father-son bonding, there's music, which Pirner calls his best friend. "It's the blood that runs through me," he says. "I kind of can't live without it. If that's unhealthy, so be it. I'd fuckin' die for this shit. I don't give a fuck." **CB**

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Why won't my boyfriend open up about his kinks?



Dan Savage

I've been seeing this guy who keeps making D/s-ish jokes and moves—he smacks my butt a lot, for example. When I let him know I like it, he's suddenly not into it. He says it's "disturbing" that I like what he's been doing. Two questions: 1) Smacking my butt is okay so long as I don't want it? 2) Enjoying what he's doing makes me a freak?

JOKING ABOUT CONSENSUAL KINKS

Two options: 1) He goes in for domineering head games and "playful" violence because he's abusive and controlling. 2) He's got kinks, but he hasn't managed to incorporate his kinks into his sex life in a healthy, consensual manner—and now that he knows you enjoy the same things he does (but you're healthier about them than he is), he's projecting his self-loathing onto you. Either way, JACK, you're going to need to DTMFA.

My boyfriend complains that our sex life is too vanilla. I want him to be satisfied, but he won't tell me what else he wants to do. Recently, he suggested an open relationship. I don't want to be in an open relationship and I told him as much. But I'm fully open to being more kinky or whatever else he needs. I've tried mixing it up, but he just looks at me strangely and asks me to stop whatever I'm doing. Can I do anything to fix this? Any insight would be appreciated.

I'M NOT GOOD AT ACRONYMS

He knows what he wants, and he can't or won't tell you. Either he can't because he's so sexually repressed that he's incapable of pushing the words out of his mouth, or he won't because his non-vanilla desires are so extreme as to be deal-breaker-level repulsive to anyone who doesn't share them. But complaining about your sex life without elaborating or giving you any constructive feedback at all is disqualifying asshole, INGAA. You'll also have to DTMFA.

I have been with my unicorn boyfriend for four months. The sexual chemistry between us is out of this world! I'm a woman who's very open-minded when it comes to trying

new things: I've had threesomes and four-somes, tried every toy on the market, done anal sex, BDSM, and many other things. He is sexually experienced, but he's not open-minded. One thing he won't do is kiss me after I've swallowed his load. We've been together only four months, so maybe I just need to wait and hope that he'll come around. Or is there something I can do to get him to try it?

CAN'T UNICORN MAN UP?

If that's the only thing he won't do—if every toy on the market is on the table, along with threesomes, foursomes, BDSM, etc.—then he's pretty adventurous. But if kissing after you've swallowed is the only mildly kinky thing you've attempted with him and it was a no, he may not be adventurous enough to deserve unicorn status. But I will say this in his defense...

Kissing someone who has just swallowed your load (or snowballing with someone who wants you to swallow your own load) presents a challenge for many men. Some silly straight men worry that tasting their own come will turn them gay or make them look gay—I've gotten letters from girlfriends who thought their boyfriends were gay because they were too willing to kiss them after a blowjob. But there are gay men out there who don't want to deep-kiss the guy who just blew them—and they're obviously not worried about turning gay (already are) or seeming gay (ditto). So what gives? Blame what's known as the "refractory period," CUMU. Immediately after a man ejaculates, his dick starts to go soft and he loses all interest in sex—hormones have been released into his bloodstream that short-circuit sexual arousal. Bodily fluids and orifices a man was happily lapping up or at a minute ago are suddenly repulsive, not because the dude is necessarily inhibited or insecure, CUMU, but because he's having his period—his refractory period.

mail@savagelove.net

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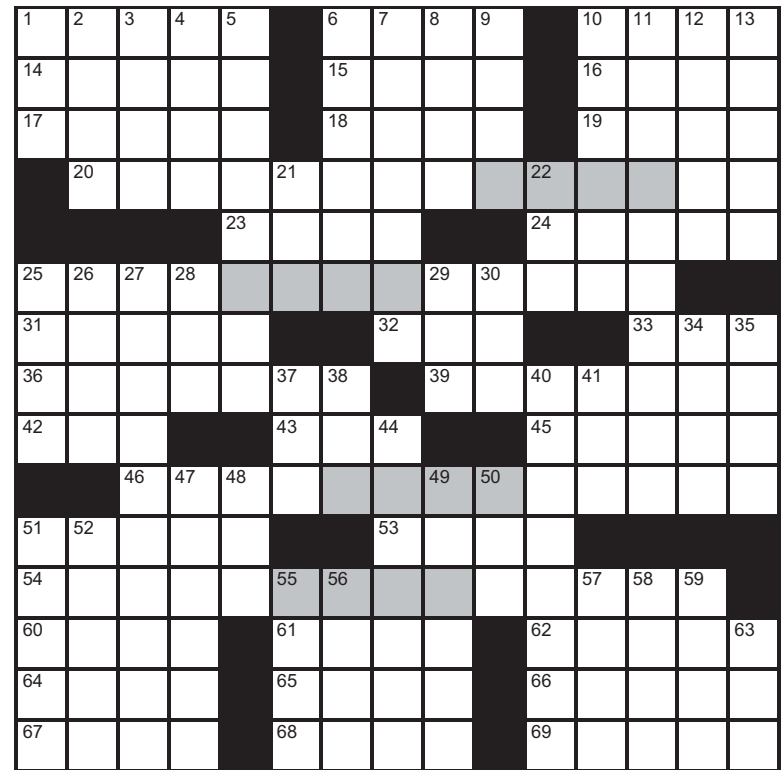
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Across

- 1 Blue Ribbon brewery
- 6 Bic cap?
- 10 ___ Bator
- 14 Hare's habitat
- 15 Criminal mastermind's home
- 16 Factory girl?
- 17 Game with 54 wooden blocks
- 18 "The Thin Man" canine
- 19 ___ B'rith (Sons of the Covenant)
- 20 Impossible, like an upset victory
- 23 Canoeing site
- 24 Record over, say
- 25 Billboard or The Hollywood Reporter, e.g.
- 31 Surfer who got onboard in the '90s, likely
- 32 Miracle ending?
- 33 Swear
- 36 Future lawyer's major, possibly
- 39 Teaching approach based on set theory
- 42 Place to get off: Abbr.
- 43 Bloomington-to-Louisville dir.
- 45 Johnson of "The NBA on TNT"
- 46 Traditional Provençal stew
- 51 Squarely
- 53 Just read the post and comments, say
- 54 Squelch
- 60 Maker of HEMNES furniture
- 61 Transom's locale

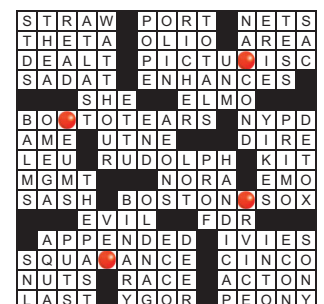
- 62 "Up" studio
- 64 ___ tide
- 65 Quart ending
- 66 Ski resort in Vermont
- 67 Salinger character who says "I'd be extremely flattered if you'd write a story exclusively for me sometime"
- 68 Prying
- 69 Basic belief

Down

- 1 Quick lunch
- 2 Kind of code
- 3 Google competitor
- 4 Beowulf, e.g.
- 5 Feature's lead-ins
- 6 "Into the Wild" setting
- 7 "The Great Gatsby" setting
- 8 Yellow journalist Skeeter of Harry Potter
- 9 Kind of defense
- 10 In utero
- 11 "Dynasty" co-star
- 12 Certain schs.
- 13 Assault on the eardrums
- 21 "Forrest Gump" setting
- 22 Jeans brand marketed for young girls
- 25 Listeners
- 26 Grounded item
- 27 Annual hoops postseason award
- 28 "Ad majorem ___ gloriam" ("For the greater glory of God")
- 29 "Prince Valiant" character
- 30 "Avatar" actress

- Saldana
- 34 Bluesman Rush
- 35 "Here we go!"
- 37 TV franchise that uses songs by The Who for their themes
- 38 "Lost" setting: Abbr.
- 40 Jugular
- 41 3-D exam
- 44 Woodstock organizer Tiber and namesakes
- 47 Already recorded
- 48 "Not again!"
- 49 Silver Slugger Huff
- 50 "Dude!"
- 51 Back line?
- 52 Hurls
- 55 "Paradise Lost" setting
- 56 13-stringed Japanese zither
- 57 "Give me the ball!"
- 58 Team members
- 59 Receptionist's question
- 63 "Bah!"

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